

## ABSTRACT

A sheet feeding device for an image forming apparatus includes a plurality of separator pads each having a particular coefficient of friction with respect to sheets for separating the sheets one by one. An automatic switching mechanism automatically replaces the separator pads. The automatic switching mechanism includes a pad pressure switching section, a pad angle switching section, a ball screw with a worm wheel mounted thereon, a ball nut meshing with the ball screw, a worm meshing with the worm wheel for moving a movable member in the widthwise direction of the sheets via the ball screw, a pad motor for causing the worm to rotate, and a sensor responsive to the position of the movable member. The device automatically selects one of the separator pads and an angle thereof in order to set up optimal sheet feed conditions matching with environmental conditions including temperature and humidity.